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REV. DR. CLEAVELAND'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,

PREACHED AT ROCHESTER, N. Y.

OCTOBER 6, 1863.

MOTIVES TO THE MISSIONARY WORK.

A

SERMON,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

MEETING IN ROCHESTER, N. Y.

OCTOBER 6, 1863.

BY

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1863.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Rochester, N. Y., October, 1863.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. Cleaveland for his Sermon, preached on Tuesday evening, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*

SERMON.

LUKE xxiv. 45–47.

THEN OPENED HE THEIR UNDERSTANDING, THAT THEY MIGHT UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES, AND SAID UNTO THEM, THUS IT IS WRITTEN, AND THUS IT BEHOOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER, AND TO RISE FROM THE DEAD THE THIRD DAY; AND THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME AMONG ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.

This is the first great commission ever received by the church from her risen Lord, for the evangelization of the world. Forty days after, it was repeated in still more emphatic terms, as he stood ready to depart. That was the day of his ascension; this was the day of his resurrection. That reveals the thought last on his mind before he disappeared from mortal sight; this discloses the thought first in his heart when he rose from the dead and entered on his new career of triumph. It was the same great thought that filled his soul from the first to the last moment of his resurrection-life on earth. So that in the deliverance of the text, we have the very inauguration of the work of missions. Here are the first principles, the very roots from which the entire growth has sprung, and on a vital connection with which, depend its vigor and fruitfulness. All the value, all the efficiency, and all the grandeur of our cause, lie in the simple, but fundamental truths which gave it birth. Higher than these we never can rise — beyond them we never can pass. Happy will it be for us, and for our success, if we can keep mind and heart in intelligent and loving sympathy with them.

As, then, lost Christian zeal can only be recovered by a renewed touch of the great magnet from which all its electric

force is derived, let us go back to the hour and the spot from whence this sublime movement broke forth upon the world,—back to the first Great Missionary, and his first great words, as, with lips just released from the seal of death, he commissions his Apostles for the ministry of reconciliation: and in that august Presence, let us charge ourselves anew with the momentous work we have in hand, and open our souls to the glowing pulsations of his infinite heart.

The first thing that arrests attention in the account of this original missionary meeting, is the change wrought by our Lord on the Apostles themselves, by way of qualification for their work. He "opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." He not only expounded the Word to them, but he opened their minds to comprehend the exposition. He imparted to them that inward, spiritual illumination, without which the Scriptures are, at best, but a dead letter. When Christ performed this service for his disciples, they saw at once, as they had never seen before, that it was incumbent on him to suffer death, and rise again; and that since the atonement now made is the only ground of salvation, it became their highest duty and privilege to proclaim repentance and remission of sins in his name, among all nations. If any man, therefore, fails to discern the true relations of Christ's death and resurrection to the salvation of souls, or the true relations of the church to impenitent sinners and the unevangelized world, it is certain that his understanding has not yet been opened by the Lord Jesus to the real meaning of the Scriptures. In other words, the work of missions is a fruit of the Spirit of Christ. Till he opens the heart, there is no generous outflow of love to souls, no quenchless zeal for the honor of God, no vital force to outlast and overcome all discouragement and opposition. It is this that gives reality to things unseen and eternal; that discloses the exalted nature and priceless worth of the soul; that lifts the curtain of the world to come, and reveals an empire, vast as immensity, peopled with the countless generations of countless worlds, and governed by one Infinite Being whose presence and glory fill it. This it is that uncovers the pit of woe, and

shows the sinner's doom; this too, brings near the home of the blessed, and the rewards of the righteous. And it is when, with an eye of faith, we look down into the horrors of the one, or up to the glories of the other, that the spirit of missions comes upon us, and we feel that we cannot labor too earnestly to spread that gospel, which alone rescues man from perdition and raises him to heaven.

In commissioning his Apostles, our Lord, you will observe, enjoins it upon them, to begin their work of love at Jerusalem. And why begin at Jerusalem? Was it not here that he had encountered the boldest, the deadliest, the most unrelenting opposition? Was it not here that a malignant persecution had been set on foot against him? Was not this the prolific fountain that had poisoned the whole nation of the Jews with enmity to God? Was it not in Jerusalem that a conspiracy had been formed against the life of Christ? Had she not just murdered her own Messiah? And does he now offer to Jerusalem the first benefits of that redeeming blood which Jerusalem had shed? Does he extend the first overtures of mercy to that very multitude who cried, "Not this man, but Barrabas;"—"Away with him, crucify him"? Does he seek out the very men whose hands are still reeking with his blood, and invite them to share the blessings of his grace? Yes, it is even so! Such is the sublime elevation, the illimitable range, and the quenchless fire of Christ's love, that it yearns toward his worst enemies, and selects his murderers as the first objects of his compassionate regard. The fact that a man is peculiarly wicked and inimical to God, so far from repelling the Saviour, excites his pity, and moves him to acts of kindness and offers of mercy. It was on this principle that Christ would have his disciples begin their mission at Jerusalem. This was to be the starting-point of the missionary work; from this centre the field was to be swept with a radius equal to the earth's diameter. Here, too, we have the key-note of the enterprise,—*love to the bitterest foes*,—love which makes its first advances to the most ill-deserving! A love which could begin at Jerusalem, would surely never stop till it had encompassed the whole world:—if it could overleap this first and highest obstacle, it is certain that nothing else

would arrest its progress. In the fulfillment of our mission, therefore, we may carry this gospel to the ends of the earth, assured that we shall find no people so corrupt that the love of Christ will not reach and reform them; we shall find no case of depravity so desperate as to preclude the application of this all-sufficient remedy.

Such, then, is the great work committed to the church by her ascended Lord. Let us now look at the motives by which it is enforced upon our hearts and consciences. I name

1. *The command of Christ.*

Co-operation in the work of missions is not left to our discretion, or to our good-will; it is imposed as a duty. The command emanates from the highest authority, and can neither be resisted or neglected without sin. The majesty of a sovereign is impressed on every word,—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." No ingenuity can torture this into mere advice; no ignorance or dullness can fail to understand it; on no pretext can it be evaded, which would not be equally good against every other precept of the Bible.

It is the command of *the newly risen* Saviour. When he first uttered it, he had but just come forth from the grave. It is not the requirement of a sovereign reposing amid the peaceful glories of his heavenly throne and kingdom, and enjoining labors in which himself had no share. It comes from one still standing, in humble form, on the earth, bearing on his person the scars of that mighty conflict in which he had vanquished the powers of death and hell, leading captivity captive: it is the command of Him who had just come up from treading the wine-press alone, in the greatness of his strength, his garments dyed in blood, and whose own arm had brought him salvation. In this precept there breathes the memory of a fearful struggle, an unknown distress, a mysterious weight of woe, an agony that must have conquered the most heroic fortitude, had it not been sustained by the whole strength of his Godhead. Had he possessed no right in virtue of his divinity, he would have fairly purchased it by the battle he had fought, and the victory he had won. The work he requires *of* us, is nothing to the

work he has done *for* us. On the field where he bids us toil, he had wrought himself, with incessant and exhausting labor. He had borne every burden we are to bear, and infinitely more. But for what he endured, our burdens would have been insupportable, our duties impracticable. By his patient obedience and sufferings, a path has been opened for us, not of salvation only, but of usefulness. And now, when he closes his laborious mission by commanding us to enter on that path, and co-operate with him in carrying out the work he had begun, preaching repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations, shall we not obey? Need we any thing more than this simple injunction? When the crucified one, just descended from the cross, just risen from the grave, tells us to proclaim to every nation, every soul, what he has done and suffered for man's salvation, shall we not do it? Shall we not fly on the wings of the wind to fulfill the great commission? But again —

It is our Saviour's *last* command. The last words of expiring greatness, — how precious, how weighty! The last words of departing goodness, — how sacred, how heavenly! Is there any duty you are more careful to perform than the dying command of a sainted father or mother? Jesus, the loftiest, saintliest being that ever trod this earth, left a farewell commission with his bereaved church. His great work finished, — all things ready, — the moment at hand when he was to be received up to glory, — yet had he one parting command, one farewell injunction, before he could leave them. Had the world understood that scene as it is now understood, had it been publicly known that the King of Zion then stood on Mount Olivet, ready to ascend into heaven, and that he waited but to utter one last command to his disciples, — what multitudes would have covered the summit and declivities of the mount, and filled the valleys below, and hung upon every elevated point commanding a view of the scene, — with what solemn hush and reverence would they have listened to catch those last words, that final charge! Nothing less than the weight of eternity would have seemed impressed on the farewell utterance of the world's Redeemer. And so, in truth, it was. Although the millions were not there, and only a few

persecuted disciples gathered with affectionate reverence about the person of their Lord, the occasion was none the less august, the words none the less momentous. They wax greater with the roll of ages, gathering a more awful sacredness as the web of history unfolds to the gaze of the church. Uttered so near to the moment of his final disappearance, no other deliverance of Christ is clothed with an emphasis so sublime. It breathes of mercy and of majesty, of grace and of justice, of goodness and of severity. It peals out on the ear of startled nations, and down on the stream of coming ages, with a voice which arrests the careless, and rebukes the disobedient. And can *we* neglect *such* a command? While the heavens are opening over the spot, and angels are hovering, and countless worlds are looking on in silent wonder, and the eternal Father himself is waiting to receive his victorious Son, do we not hear the imperial mandate thunder as from the excellent glory, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*"?

2. We are urged to earnest efforts in behalf of this great cause, *by the immense work that yet remains to be done.*

Fifty years ago, the heathen were estimated, in round numbers, at six hundred millions. You remember how those terrific figures, — emblazoned before the eyes of Christendom, — trumpeted in startling appeals from land to land, — were employed by the Holy Ghost as one of the grand arguments that first roused the church to the work of modern missions. Now let me ask, What, after a half century of missionary labor, is the present number of the heathen? Can we report any material diminution in those dreadful figures? Can we reduce them by so much as one million, or even half a million? No. Thousands, and tens of thousands, have been brought to Christ, but there are the six hundred millions still! The banner of the cross has been planted in almost every pagan land, and many are the witnesses for Jesus among those idolaters; still there are the countless masses of India, the untrodden depths of Africa, and the unexplored regions of China. As if in

defiance of all our efforts, heathenism still glories in her proud temples, still whitens the earth with the bones of her victims, and darkens the sky with the smoke of her idolatrous sacrifices. Who can look at the hoary heights and massive fortresses of this ancient empire of sin, and see how firm and strong it stands, and not feel the stupendous nature of the work? Think of its *antiquity!* dating back thousands of years before Christ. Think of its *origin!* from the father of lies, who, having set himself up as the god of this world, invented this system of idolatrous worship, that he might bind the apostate millions of earth to his cruel sceptre; — "for the things which the Gentiles sacrifice," says Paul, "they sacrifice to devils, and not to God."

But what is the lesson we are to gather from these moral wastes which still stretch out their interminable spaces before the missionaries of the cross? Is it a lesson of despair, or even of despondency? No; it is a lesson of rebuke, of repentance, of faith, of duty, of increased effort, but not of despair. Despair is for those who believe in no God, no Saviour, no Holy Ghost, no gospel, no atonement, no covenant, no promise, no invincible grace;—but co-workers with Omnipotence, know nothing of despair. We have great reason, however, for shame. Much, indeed, has been done, but nothing to what ought to have been done, and might have been done. Had the laborers been tenfold more numerous, the faith and love tenfold stronger, and the prayer tenfold more abundant and energetic, the success might have been a hundredfold greater. Glorious things have been achieved, it is true. But after all, there are the six hundred millions, still groping in the shadow of death, and perishing, twenty millions a year! And as long as those dense, dark columns present their unthinned ranks to the gaze of Christendom and the world, how can we feel that Christians are doing their whole duty? Is this a fulfillment of the great commission? Do we not hear a voice from the solemn past, saying with an emphasis, never so loud or awful as now,—'Church of God, how long—O how long, shall "darkness cover the earth, and gross darkness, the people?" How long shall more than three-fourths of the race be left in

heathen blindness? How many more generations shall perish before they hear of Jesus and the resurrection? How many centuries shall roll on, before the church is willing to spare her silver and gold, her sons and daughters, until the wants of all mankind are met? When, O when *will* she go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature?'

3. We are constrained to this work by the *love of Christ.*

The love of Christ! who can measure it? We ascend in thought above the earth, above these visible heavens—we pass onward and upward, from star to star, from system to system, until,—suns and systems, far beneath us,—we raise our eyes, within the pearly gates, through towering hierarchies of angels and arch-angels, to a throne, high and lifted up, standing in massive and immutable strength against a background of infinite light. No mortal vision can bear the look of Him who sits thereon;—no mortal tongue can describe the surrounding scene of angelic beauty and glory,—the solemn bowing down, the ravishing minstrelsy, the grand choral song, rising in lofty praise to the mysterious Being who reigns in awful majesty over the universe of worlds.

Now, from this elevation, take the distance to the manger in Bethlehem:—from Godhead, to humanity;—from heaven's throne, to a malefactor's cross;—from the music of celestial voices, to the execrations and curses of an infuriated populace;—from the blissful life of his own glorious home in the bosom of the Father, to the agonies of death by crucifixion;—from his seat of pre-eminent authority, with the created universe for his foot-stool, to the narrow confines, intense darkness, and unbroken silence of the tomb! Can you fathom the descent? Have you a plummet to sound the infinite depth? Can you comprehend how it is, that He who bore so easily the weight of countless worlds, now faints and dies beneath the burden of sin? More than all, can your intelligence grasp the awful problem of a divine being standing in your place, and dying in your behalf? If this is too high for human, even for angelic powers, it still remains true that what you cannot *understand*, you may at least *feel.* Your thoughts may plunge in unfath-

omed depths, and find no shore, no foothold on which to rest; yet all the more will your soul be filled with the fragrant mystery of Christ's love. Incompetent as you are to penetrate the whole philosophy of the crucifixion, yet this you may know, (and to know it is life eternal!) that all this humiliation and agony was for *you*,—for your deliverance from sin and perdition. And just here lies the main-spring of the missionary enterprise. This it was that roused the Apostles to those untiring labors which ceased not but with life. The process by which they arrived at this mightiest argument for Christian effort, was simple, natural, and as open to us as it was to them. They had looked on their suffering, dying Master, merely as the unhappy victim of Jewish malice; but when he told them that it was necessary, as a part of the divine plan, that he should suffer, and rise from the dead the third day, in order that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, the inference flashed at once through their minds, as a surprising and joyful discovery,—'Then it was for *our sakes* he endured the horrors of crucifixion!—in all that scene of shame and agony, it seems, he was working out our redemption from sin and hell! And was it *then* that we forsook him and fled? Is *this* the love we have requited with unmanly cowardice and desertion?' Think of the effect of this discovery on the broken-hearted Peter! Crushed under a remorseful sense of his great crime, and doubtful whether he was ever again to be recognized as a disciple, how must the glorious truth have amazed and melted him! 'What! did my blessed Master die for *me?* Did my injured Lord go from the judgment-hall, where I so wickedly denied him, to pour out his blood for *my* guilty soul?—to wash away *my* damning sins? O, was there ever such love as this?—so pure, so deep, so self-sacrificing! Shall I ever deny him again? Can I ever love him enough? Is there any thing I will not do or suffer for so kind a Saviour?'

The love of Christ in dying for lost sinners was the one thought which, more than any and all others, burned in the hearts and inspired the labors of the first missionaries. Ask the great Apostle to the Gentiles what moves him to the perilous undertaking? He answers, "The love of Christ constraineth

me." But, Paul, why persevere in the face of such tremendous obstacles and dangers? 'Because of the great love wherewith he hath loved us.' But think of the sacrifices you are making, of fortune, position and fame! "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." But why wear out your strength, and rush upon certain martyrdom? "He loved me! he gave himself to die for me!" But what do you expect to gain by this course? To "comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length, the height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Well, then, if you will identify yourself with the despised Nazarene, you must share his reproach. "God forbid that *I should glory*, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!"

And will any lower motive, think you, suffice for us, in prosecuting the work of modern missions? Is it not to speak the Saviour's precious name — to make known his matchless worth — to set forth his dying love — to publish the glad tidings of redemption to a perishing world — to win lost souls to his cross, and add star after star to his crown, — is not this the grand motive-power of the missionary enterprise? Other considerations, doubtless, may have their legitimate influence; but only as they emanate from, and are articulated with, this master-principle, are they acceptable to God, or valuable to Christianity. Our natural sympathies may be strongly excited by the temporal miseries of the heathen, we may take pleasure in sending them the gospel as the necessary means of improving their condition in time, and even their prospects for eternity. We may be drawn into the missionary movement by the air of romance with which some minds invest it. There is the fascination of heroic self-sacrifice in leaving home and kindred and country, for an exile in distant climes; there are the charms of foreign travel and residence in lands made classic by ancient story and song, or made sacred by the footsteps of Patriarchs and Prophets, of Apostles and the Son of God himself. There, too, is the elevated field of toil, lifting the humblest of its laborers into the view of a great spectatorship; the tempting

opportunity of acquiring a general, perhaps a national, possibly a world-wide reputation for scholarship or discovery. We may be drawn into active co-operation with this enterprise by the imposing aspect of a powerful organization, wielding an immense influence, receiving the confidence and support of millions, and carrying forward a system of missions which commands the admiration of the world. There is something, moreover, in these annual convocations, with their crowded meetings, impressive solemnities, exciting discussions, and thrilling associations, which magnetizes the mind to an unwonted fervor. In an atmosphere so electric, vivid imaginations, and sympathetic natures, may easily kindle into a glow of excitement, under which high resolves are taken, eloquent words are spoken, and generous deeds are performed.

All these influences may indeed be sanctified and exalted by Christian principle. It is equally true, however, that they may stand apart from it entirely. It is quite possible that the man who, under these circumstances, warms towards the cause of missions, would be altogether indifferent to it, if the circumstances had no existence. If the Board held its annual meetings now, as it did fifty years ago, in private parlors, encompassed by an atmosphere of chilling incredulity, neglect and unfriendliness, — with nearly the whole heathen world closed against its missionaries, — with a scanty treasury, — with no starred names of martyred heroes on its catalogue, — with no illustrious record of conquests achieved, — with, as yet, only unpromising experiments to reward its courageous venture on the word and faithfulness of God; — few, I imagine, would, under such circumstances, be drawn to the cause by any attraction of romance, or of distinction, or of visible grandeur, or of popular excitement. Nothing less than the love of Christ, and of souls for which Christ died, would ordinarily avail to identify a man with an undertaking so forlorn in the public view. No feebler motive, I am confident, could successfully encounter the stern realities of the mission field.

And we may rest assured that what was necessary to success in that "day of small things," — that period of inception and experiment, — is no less requisite now that the work has swelled

to such vast dimensions, has impressed into its service so many auxiliary forces, and is moving on with such prodigious momentum. The God of missions accepts no man in this cause, who is not inspired by gratitude for the love of Christ. The money and the influence we offer in his service, he may use for his own gracious purposes; but we ourselves will not be accepted, unless prompted thereto by the same high consideration that constrained the first missionaries. Natural philanthropy may kindle up a feeble and transient blaze of compassion for heathen wretchedness; but Christ's love for lost souls no man may feel, but by the Holy Ghost. Flesh and blood never reveal that to us: it can only come by an illumination from on high. It is a fruit of renewing grace — it is a peculiar and essential element of experimental Christianity. Hence its power with God; hence its depth of feeling, the tenacity of its hold, and the energy of its operation. Nor has the experience of eighteen centuries taken any thing from the original freshness, and the sweet surprise with which the convert of our time makes his first discovery of Christ's love. Not more suddenly did it flash as a strange light from heaven on the astonished Apostles, than it breaks to-day on the quickened soul in the moment of its spiritual baptism. Nor will the eyes once opened to the glory of that sight, ever wholly lose the vision. Thenceforth a new life will breathe, a new fire will burn, a new power will work in the soul. It is a principle of unequaled moral leverage, lifting the Christian into a purer atmosphere, introducing him to a more exquisite experience, and putting him upon a loftier course of action than he had ever deemed possible. No other motive can impart such a grateful sense of freedom, and generous enthusiasm, — can stimulate to such noble endeavors, and give such support under hardship and peril. If this fails, every thing will fail. Should the time ever come when the love of Christ shall cease to be the animating principle, the main impulse of the missionary enterprise, then the work of missions will itself die out. Organizations may survive, but only to show that vitality is extinct. The usual movements may be gone through with, but without spirit, force, or effect. Annual meetings may be held, but to glorify man rather than

God. Christ will not be there; and the love of souls — the love of the heathen — will give place to the love of this present world.

I have exhibited some of the great motives which urge the people of God to an energetic prosecution of the work of missions; — the perishing state of the heathen; the command of Christ that the gospel shall be preached to them; and the constraining power of his own love for sinners. To what practical results, let me now ask, in conclusion, should we be led by these weighty considerations? What specific forms of action do they press upon us, as the imperative duty of the present time?

The first and most important duty suggested by the foregoing arguments, is *the entire consecration of ourselves to the Lord Jesus.*

Consecration is the simple and legitimate consequence of a real discovery of Christ's love. It results from no selfish calculation — no cold, iron chain of logic — no frothy rhetoric — no shallow, transient impulse — no vapid sentimentalism — no artificial lashing up of the soul to feeling. It is purely the effect of faith's direct look at the Lamb of God. One believing glance at that sacrifice of love, and the soul takes fire. There may be no conscious process of argument, yet argument there is, the most potent. The philosophy is unperceived, yet instant and irresistible. It is the philosophy of the heart. It is the result of that swift "chemistry of thought" which, under given conditions, spontaneously combines in results as exquisite, as they are surprising. Ask me not to demonstrate it by logical process. If you need an elaborate argument to persuade you to this consecration; if a simple look at the cross, and at Him who hung there, — at the love which triumphed there, and at the redemption which was wrought out there, — does not of itself reveal to you the secret attraction of that great magnet of hearts, then, alas, how far do you stand from that glorious centre of loyalty and love!

Calvary, then, is the place for reconsecration. It is when stand-

ing around the cross of Christ,—with its atoning blood sprinkled on our consciences; with its mingled glories of justice and mercy streaming over us; with its flood of love bathing our souls, and its touching memories subduing our hearts,—that we may most fitly renew our oath of allegiance to the Head of the church. This self-consecration is indeed the noblest and most needed offering we can present to the cause of missions. The great want of that cause at the present moment is an increase of piety in the churches. There is, indeed, a pressing demand for more money, and more missionaries; but the most urgent necessity of all is a larger measure of the spirit of Christ in the members of his body. However godly, or faithful, the laborers on mission ground, it is impossible but that their success should be affected by the state of the spiritual atmosphere among ourselves. As the head and pressure at the reservoir, determines the elevation to which the water may be thrown from the pipes in the distant city, so the degree of piety in the constituent churches must exert an influence, for good or evil, on the missions supported. Not to speak of the likelihood that the men who go out from year to year will share the general tone and spirit of the community which sends them,—there is the powerful influence of prayer, by which Christians at home may mightily co-operate with the workmen abroad. And how efficiently may the earnest intercessions of a godly people be followed up by the silent argument of a holy life, and of a tender yearning of soul over the mission field. An habitual and deep-toned godliness pervading the churches, would react on our missionary operations with overwhelming effect. Gifts bestowed, would be consecrated by a simplicity of faith, enriched by a wealth of love, and winged to their designation by a power of prayer, which would tell in glorious results on the hearts of the heathen. Alas, how far do we fall short of this desirable condition! The type of piety, on the breath of which this Board rose into existence, is certainly undergoing serious modifications, and who will say, for the better? Who does not feel that the glory of that light is fading,—that the power of that early faith and love is wanting? Who does not acknowledge that the grand necessity of the church in these

days is a new baptism of the Holy Ghost? What we need is an unction from on high, that shall lift our actual life to the full level of our principles and professions;—nay, that shall raise us into the atmosphere of the cross; that shall make every Christian a witness and a missionary for Jesus, whatever his sphere;—willing to perform any service, to labor in any place, and encounter any hardship, suffering or peril, at the call, and for the sake of his Master. He who has this spirit is a missionary of the cross, whether he exercise his ministry among the savages of Africa, or the churches of this favored land. It is a common, but a great mistake, as it is a great evil, to regard the spirit of missions as a peculiar kind of Christianity, not to be expected, perhaps not required, of Christians generally. So far from being something superadded to, or different from, what is usually understood as the Christian spirit, it is precisely the same thing. The true spirit of missions is, simply and emphatically, the *spirit of Christ.* It is love for the perishing souls of men—such love as prompts to personal effort and sacrifice in their behalf. It is not predicated on locality or condition at all; it is compassion for lost sinners wherever found. There may be just as much of a missionary spirit in laboring to save souls in Christian as in heathen lands. Indeed, to be a Christian at all, one must have something of the missionary spirit. No pity for the souls of the heathen argues no pity for any man's soul. It is a contradiction in terms, for a man claiming to be a disciple of Christ to excuse himself from service among the heathen, on the ground that he never had the spirit of missions. It is tantamount to a confession that he has no sympathy with the Great Missionary himself—no part or lot in his salvation. Away with such unworthy, fatal misconceptions of Christianity! Suppose, in our great army of patriotic volunteers, a part should beg to be excused from marching to the front, and encountering the sterner hardships and perils of active hostilities, on the ground that they never had a patriotic spirit! Never had a patriotic spirit! Then why did you enlist? What business have you in the army? You, a soldier, and not ready to go, at the word of command, wherever your country sends you! And

what, think you, will our great Captain say to those who claim to be soldiers of the cross, and yet shrink from toil and danger because they lack the missionary or Christian spirit? It is time we were done with such holiday soldiering as this. Let us at least be consistent; and either renounce all pretensions to a calling for which we acknowledge our unfitness, or else manfully accept the high responsibilities we have assumed, come squarely up to the spirit of the position, and courageously undertake the duties it involves. If we *are* what we profess to be, we have enlisted, not for the home guard, nor for camp duty, but to go wherever we are ordered, to do whatever we are required. Be the field near at hand or far away; be the service easy or hard, safe or dangerous; we must hold ourselves ready to obey the will of our Master. A thorough consecration makes no reserves, stipulates no conditions, and asks no privilege, except that of being permitted to serve and suffer for the Lord Jesus, wherever and however he may appoint.

The next duty connected with our subject, is that of *Christian liberality in the supply of funds for the prosecution of our work.*

This is closely connected with the matter of consecration. For when a man gives himself to Christ, does he not give his property also? Can he give the greater, and not the less? The love which can bestow so precious a gift as the heart's deepest affection, could not at the same time tolerate any reserves in regard to things of inferior value. The consecration that does not embrace every thing, is essentially defective. Our charities should be conducted on the principle that self-denial is an essential element of personal sanctification. Almsgiving is enjoined in Scripture, quite as much for the spiritual benefit of the donor, as for the temporal relief of the recipient. It is prescribed as a means of grace, because it exercises both our benevolence and our self-denial. And the more we deny ourselves for Christ's sake, provided we are sincere and cheerful in it, the richer will be the blessing on our own souls. It is a great mistake, therefore, to give to benevolent objects, only what we can easily spare, and never know it. Even if that reaches the wants of the destitute, it does not reach our own case. Such a rule of

charity indicates excessive self-indulgence,—a surfeit of worldly good, symptomatic of spiritual apoplexy. The case is alarming, and demands a bold and resolute effort at depletion. The lancet must be applied freely and without delay. Let the charities be at once doubled, quadrupled, tenfolded. Let us give that which we shall miss when it is gone, in some cherished, but now restrained indulgence. Let us make some actual and costly sacrifice, that shall put our love to the proof. Let us apply an intrepid surgery to the spirit that would hoard wealth on earth, lest it impoverish our souls, and prove a sad reversion in the world to come.

It is no part of my purpose to determine the delicate question as to personal and family expenditures. Nor is it needful. If the principle of supreme love has passed over from self to Christ, this question can, and will, be easily settled by each individual. If self reigns, we shall be concerned to know how much we can do for our own temporal interest, and how little will answer for Christ. If Jesus reigns in our hearts, we shall only care to ask how little will serve for ourselves, and how much can be spared for our Master. Place the question under the burning focus of supreme love to the Redeemer, and the ligatures with which selfishness has bound up the heart will be consumed, and leave the soul to the generous impulses of Christian gratitude. To a man whose breast dilates with such pure and blissful emotions, what are the pleasures, the elegancies, the glories of wealth, but

> "Snow that falls upon a river,
> A moment white, then gone forever."

Instead of using his wealth to pamper the lusts of the flesh, he will account it his honor and happiness to use it for the glory of God in the conversion of sinners. Alas, how often are these poor vanities with which men regale the passing moment balanced,—in the souls of lost heathen,—by the weight of eternal woe! O, could that professed Christian, who lavishes upon his princely establishment, and his habitual luxuries, an uncounted and ungrudged expenditure, while he doles out, with apparent reluctance, a few scores, or at most, a few hun-

dreds of dollars for the salvation of the world, have his eyes opened to the true relations of things,—could he look upon his possessions in the light of eternal realities, and with a vision quickened, like that of Elisha's servant,—he would see them spotted with the blood of souls. The guilty proof of his neglect of lost immortals, would cry out against him from all his beautiful things.

It is a fearful thought, that property, which God intended for his own glory, will be avenged on those who have compelled it to serve their selfish lusts. Every dollar thus perverted will become a swift witness before God, of all the base uses to which it has been degraded. Alas, how hard are some men toiling to accumulate the testimony which is to strike them dumb with guilt in the day of judgment! Be it our care to make friends of this mammon, by a faithful consecration of it to the cause of Christ, so that in Jesus' name, it may plead for us before the throne, in many an act of faith, in many a deed of kindness, in many a soul saved, in many an idolater brought out of darkness into marvelous light.

Finally, all our gifts and consecrations to the cause of missions will be in vain, unless God makes them effectual by the almighty co-operation of the Holy Spirit. This work began with a dispensation of the Spirit. At that first missionary meeting, already referred to, Jesus breathed on his assembled disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." On the very day they commenced their ministry, a still more affluent outpouring of the Spirit fell upon them, like a mighty, rushing wind, with cloven tongues of fire. From that day to this, the work has prospered only as the same omnipotent agency has attended the labors of the church. If that is withdrawn, the missions languish and die. It is the great rain of God's strength, without which all spiritual vegetation ceases.

But this indispensable blessing is usually bestowed only in answer to prayer. The Apostles were praying and waiting for it when it descended on the day of Pentecost. When Christians feel the chill and darkness caused by the partial suspension of the Spirit's influence, and begin to sigh and yearn after him,

lifting up penitent hands in earnest prayer, for his return, then the time of visitation draws nigh. Just here, then, lies a special and most important duty. The American Board of Missions was prayed into existence, by Judson and Hall, Mills and Newell, and other devoted spirits, whose hearts the Lord had touched. It has been borne up, ever since, on the breath of prayer. Prayer has planted every mission, and wrestled into the kingdom every heathen convert. Let us not dream of success without prayer. If deserted monthly concerts indicate that the churches are growing weary of intercession, the effects will surely be seen in some new check of the missionary work, and in some deeper decline of piety at home. What need we more than this decay of prayer, to account for the religious declension which now afflicts the land? Why else this cessation of revivals — this falling off of religious activities — this lull of the breeze that kept every thing astir — this spiritual languor and stagnation? Yet it is not, we trust, an absolute and final departure. The Holy Spirit hovers near, and prayer may call him forth again, to breathe fresh vitality into this scene of religious inaction. This moral torpor by no means forbids the hope of revival. Such moments have we seen in nature, when motion sleeps, and life itself holds its breath. You stand upon the hill-top on a summer's day. It is an hour of calm repose; the elements are still; each leaf motionless; smokes rise perpendicularly; the sail drops idly against the mast; the ship becalmed waits for the propelling force; clouds rest on their beds of ether, solid and immovable as castles of marble, or mountains of snow; and the "mute, still air" lays upon the earth like

"Music slumbering on her instrument."

Presently, you perceive a change in the outline of yon marble castle. Its turrets and towers begin to dissolve; the mountains are flowing down, and the whole vast pile is on the move; like some immense fleet, it has weighed anchor, and is sailing over the etherial ocean. You drop your eye to earth, and observe that the smokes are deflected now, and swayed in the same direction as the moving cloud; the tree-tops, too, are in

motion; every leaf is lifted, and pointed in the direction of the flying vapor. The ripe fields of grass and grain are roughened into rolling waves. And commerce, rousing from her temporary sleep, lifts up her glad pennons, shakes out her idle canvas, and, ploughing her way through the deep, soon whitens the sea with her wings, and hastens to enrich all lands with her treasures.

What the wind is to this scene of joyous life and activity, the breath of the Holy Spirit will be to the church and the world, when he visits them with his reviving grace. Waited for, longed for, prayed for, by devout souls, he at length moves on the face of the great deep, and awakes life from apparent death. Wherever his influence passes over a community, it gives a common impulse to all hearts that feel it. It turns every quickened soul towards God, as the breeze points every leaf of the forest in one direction. It sweeps over states and nations, and whatsoever it touches, springs into life. It leaves the impress of holiness on every heart, and in every home it visits. Following the track of its progress over the earth and through the ages, a spirit of praise and thanksgiving rises to God with the choral grandeur of the great Reformation; it ascends from beneath the majestic arches and fretted vaults of old cathedrals, from within the walls of humble conventicles, and from under the roofs of private dwellings; it reverberates from the rocks of Switzerland, from the glens and caves of Scotland, and from the wilds of America. And as the sublime movement rolls on, the same sweet song comes up from heathen lands, from the homes of idolaters, from amid scenes dark with the blood of human sacrifices, — until at last the whole world is vocal with its resounding echoes.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should do this? Is it more than he has promised? Is it more than he is able to perform? Is it more than he will certainly do, at some future period? Has not his Spirit often given assurance both of his power and of his purpose to fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the Lord? And at this present crisis, — by these rough and stormy winds, tearing up old institutions of oppression and cruelty, driving the

ploughshare of his judgments under the roots of ancient and mighty wrongs which obstruct the progress of his course, and shaking the nations of the earth, — does he not indicate that the 'Desire of all flesh is coming,' to make "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness"? May we not accept this tremendous overturning, as one of those grand steps in the historic march of divine Providence, which signalize great eras of religious advancement? The contrast between our own peaceful work of love and the present scene of civil war, is indeed painfully impressive; but it were disregarding the most instructive lessons of history, to deny that, bloody as it is, this conflict may be working out results of happy omen to the kingdom of Christ in general, and to the cause of missions in particular.

Yes, our work shall yet be accomplished! The cause shall triumph! The kingdom of Christ shall overspread the earth! "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." We are toiling for no uncertain end. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." It is the faithful laborer who will shout the harvest home. His will be the crowning joy of that hour, when the ransomed of the Lord shall come up in countless millions, — from Greenland and China, from India and Africa, and the far-distant islands of the sea, — washed in the blood of the Lamb, radiant with the beauty of holiness, to receive their immortal crowns. And as they "pass through glory's morning gate," the whole host of the redeemed will hail the returning conquerors in the rapturous strains of the victor's song, —

"The soft peace-march, beating, Home, brothers, Home"!

And welcoming angels respond, —

"Home, brothers, Home"!